



The President's Daily Brief

25 August 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

25 August 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The South Vietnamese have committed additional troops to their campaign to recapture the Que Son Valley. (Page 1)

Moscow is beginning to show its resentment of criticism in the Cairo press. (Page 2)

Bonn is moving ahead rapidly with its bid to normalize relations with Peking. (Page 3)

Yemen (Sana) [redacted]
[redacted] Soviet [redacted] (Page 4)

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VIETNAM

Additional government troops have been moved to Quang Nam Province to strengthen the campaign to recapture the Que Son Valley. A South Vietnamese Army regiment has been added to the government task force at Fire Support Base Baldy, and a renewed effort to retake positions lost to the Communists over the weekend has been scheduled. In addition, a new commander has been named for the ARVN 2nd Division to replace General Hiep

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[redacted] His replacement is Colonel Nhut, who was responsible for holding the garrison at An Loc.

Elements of the North Vietnamese [redacted] have moved closer to the staging area around Baldy, however, and may try to pre-empt the government initiative. In addition, a sharp enemy attack northwest of Baldy on Wednesday and the use of heavy artillery against populated areas in the coastal area--including a rare shelling of Tam Ky, the provincial capital of Quang Tin Province--may be intended to mask further infiltration of Communist regulars into the coastal lowlands.

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There were several ground clashes in and around Quang Tri City yesterday, and the enemy is continuing its heavy artillery shelling of government positions. Ground action remains light around Hue and intercepts indicate that the North Vietnamese 324B Division elements in the area have been ordered to use economy-of-force tactics.

There are signs that harder fighting is ahead in some relatively quiet areas, however. Radio direction-finding indicates that a buildup of enemy forces is under way in western Pleiku Province, near Duc Co. In the Saigon area, a North Vietnamese regiment has been detected about 15 miles northeast of Bien Hoa Airfield.

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USSR-EGYPT

Criticism of the USSR appearing in Cairo's press is beginning to bring resentment to the surface in Moscow. Until recently, the USSR sought to avoid public recriminations that could harm its longer term interests in the Middle East, but after publication of editorials considered to be "anti-Soviet" in Cairo's two main newspapers, the Soviets reacted. The first riposte appeared in this week's issue of New Times. Pravda and Izvestiya followed up with articles reflecting concern about a possible Egyptian turn to the US for support.

[redacted] Moscow is particularly embittered by Cairo's publication of Egyptian complaints, which, [redacted] could only have come about with the approval of Egypt's leaders.

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The Soviet press comments are only mildly reflective of the views expressed by Soviet diplomats in the Middle East.

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the US Embassy in Lebanon has heard of other derogatory remarks by Ambassador Azimov and other Soviet diplomats.

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WEST GERMANY

Bonn is moving ahead rapidly with its bid to normalize relations with Peking. West German and Chinese negotiators meeting in Bonn have agreed on late October or early November as the time for Foreign Minister Scheel's visit to China. Moreover, they have already worked out an agreement in principle on a communiqué to be issued at that time announcing that the two countries intend to establish relations soon.

In another decisive foreign policy move, the cabinet on 23 August decided to make ratification of last spring's inter-German traffic treaty an "urgent" matter. This helps to clear the way for prompt approval of the treaty before the Bundestag is dissolved in anticipation of elections this fall. According to the press, the opposition Christian Democrats have already decided they cannot afford to oppose the treaty, which provides for certain travel improvements between the two countries.

These moves reflect Chancellor Brandt's desire to seize the initiative in the election campaign and reverse the opposition's early lead.

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Yemen (Sana) - USSR:

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Relations between the two countries have deteriorated as a result of Moscow's failure to make good on its promises of new arms for Sana's largely Soviet-equipped military forces. The Yemeni Government is also unhappy over the USSR's expanded military aid program to Sana's adversary, Yemen (Aden).

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